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## NRM Plan

### CONTACT

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# Tall wheatgrass (*Thinopyrum ponticum*)

Reducing its impact in the Northern and Yorke NRM Region

### Description of this weed

Tall wheatgrass is a temperate perennial grass which tolerates soils of moderate subsoil salinity and moderate waterlogging. It has been widely used as a saltland pasture in south-west Victoria and the upper south-east of South Australia. Tall wheatgrass is an easy pasture to establish and manage.

Tall wheatgrass is a drought tolerant, summer active, tussock-forming perennial that grows to a height of 2 metres, in clumps about 20cm across.

The stems are tough and smooth with prominent nodes. Leaves are green, long, flat to in-rolled, prominently veined, more or less hairless and with a rough upper surface towards the sharply-pointed tips. Flower-heads are long (to 40 cm) erect, spikes and similar to wheat. The stalkless spikelets are 10-25 mm long, and grow out of notches either side of the stem, often curving away from the central stem (rachis) of the spike. Each spikelet is orientated with its flattened side towards the rachis and contains about 8-12 closely overlapping florets.



Tall wheatgrass flowers from spring to autumn and is often noticeable in late summer as the only green grass on salt affected land.

### Why is it a weed and what is the impact?

Tall wheatgrass was imported into Australia via the USA in the 1940s and its main value then was for soil conservation on saline areas. Landholders were encouraged to allow it to seed in the first year of growth to ensure good ground cover, but this led to its spread as a weed into non-target areas.



Tall wheatgrass is considered to be a serious weed when it escapes into native wetland environments, as it can quickly become dominant through crowding out all other species. Controlled management of farm stands is essential to maximise livestock nutritional value, control vermin (e.g. rabbits, foxes) habitat, reduce fire hazard and prevent unintentional spread.

Tall wheatgrass is strongly tussock forming and can quickly become clumpy and unpalatable to livestock if not well managed. In addition, the clumps or tussocks can become so large as to make a paddock almost un-trafficable.

### What can you do?

If you identify this weed in native wetland please contact your local NRM Authorised Officer for advice on control.

### Help and Assistance

#### **NRM Authorised Officers**

Snowtown – 8865 2166

Riverton – 8847 2544

Minlaton – 8853 2795

Port Augusta – 8641 1513

Peterborough – 8651 3577

Orroroo – 8658 1086

